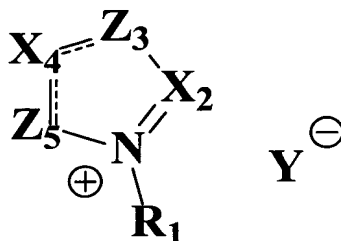


Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A multilayer film comprising a substrate bearing an aligned, fixed liquid crystal layer wherein the aligned liquid crystal layer contains an azolium salt represented by formula (I):



I

wherein

the subscripts represent the ring positions and each X is independently N or C-R;

each Z is independently N, N-R, C-(R)(R), O, S, SO₂, SO, C=O, C=S, or C=NR;

each R group is independently hydrogen or a substituent; and

Y is a charge balancing anion, which may be a separate moiety or part of an X, Z, or R;

provided two or more X, Z and R groups may form a phenyl, naphthyl, pyrizinyl, pyridyl, quinolinyl, cyclohexenyl, oxazolyl, or pyrazolyl ring;

provided the salt may be part of an oligomer or polymer.[[.]]

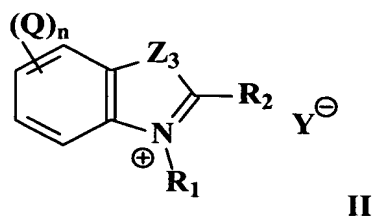
2. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein each X is C-R.

3. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein Z₃ is S or N-R.

4. (original) The film of claim 2 wherein Z₃ is S or N-R.

5. (original) The film of claim 2 wherein Z₃ is S.

6. (original) The film of claim 2 wherein Z_3 is N-R.
7. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein X_2 is C- R_2 wherein R_2 is H or a methyl group.
8. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein X_4 and Z_5 join to form a ring.
9. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the ring is a phenyl ring.
10. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the ring is a cyclohexenyl ring.
11. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein X_4 and Z_5 are both C-R groups.
12. (original) The film of claim 11 wherein both R_4 and R_5 are H, alkyl, alkoxy, or aryl groups.
13. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the compound of formula (I) is a bis compound joined at the 1 position.
14. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein Y is an anion selected from the group consisting of BF_4 , PF_6 , CF_3CO_2 , Br, Cl, COO, SO_3 , and CH_3SO_3 .
15. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1 wt% of the layer.
16. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1-10 wt% of the layer.
17. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.25-5 wt% of the layer.
18. (original) The film of claim 1 wherein the azolium salt is a benzazolium represented by formula (II):



wherein

the subscripts represent the ring positions;

Z₃ is N, N-R, C-(R)(R), O, S, SO₂, SO, C=O, C=S, or C=NR;

each R group is independently hydrogen or a substituent;

Y is a charge balancing anion, which may be a separate moiety or part of the azolium; and

each Q independently represents a substituent and n is an integer from 0 to 4.

19. (original) The film of claim 18 wherein, Z is N-R, O, or S where R is H or a substituent.

20. (original) The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1 wt% of the layer.

21. (original) The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.1-10 wt% of the layer.

22. (original) The film of claim 18 wherein the azolium salt is present in an amount of at least 0.25-5 wt% of the layer.

23. (original) A process for imparting an increased tilt angle to a polymeric liquid crystal layer upon curing comprising including in that layer an azolium salt compound according to claim 1 prior to curing.

24. (original) A process for imparting an increased tilt angle to a polymeric liquid crystal layer upon curing comprising including in that layer an azolium salt compound according to claim 18 prior to curing.

25. (New) A compensator comprising the film of claim 1.

26. (New) An optical device comprising the film of claim 1.

27. (New) A liquid crystal display comprising the film of claim 1.